FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

"For a world united in prayer"

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Our purpose: To promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God, regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

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E D I T O R I A L

SOME POSITIVE WORDS FOR THE NEGATIVE

One characteristic of organized religion that puts me off is the optimism it sells. I am also put off by the glibness of some people's positive thinking—all that whistling in the dark that they say is sunshine.

I can't afford such euphoria. It is when I get the delusion that all is well that I am most in danger of straying and of losing my way forever.

Although I am aware that my faith preaches the good news of the New Testament, and though I have recently begun to enjoy feelings of harmony with not only my fellow creatures but also our mutual Creator, I remain leary of forgetting that it was the negative aspects of my life—and only the negative aspects and all the accompanying anguish and pain—which persuaded me of not just the wisdom but for me the necessity of letting go, of letting God, of surrendering and finally of accepting. For my own sake I would not dare to forget the negative things.

The bliss that I am now able to find in my spiritual life would be greatly diminished if not extinguished, I feel certain, if I ever let slip from my memory what it was that first battered me to my knees in an attitude of prayer.

Keeping my memory green is a precaution I always take.

This does not mean that I will not tolerate your perpetual smile, your hopes that never stop springing, your faith so deep it is obviously the real foundation of your being. Nor does it mean, I trust, that you look down on me for having had to achieve your sort of serenity the hard way or for being obliged to hang onto it with a kind of anxiety that isn't at all necessary to you.

It's only human to crave security, to long for everlasting safety, to prefer happy feelings instead of bad ones.

The only people I know who satisfy such cravings, though, are children.

Even at its best, most of us know, life brings the bad feelings; they're inseparable from the good. If you are lucky enough

to avoid anger and despair, there are still all the other inevitabilities of existence —I don't need to itemize them. My point is that it is the heartbreaking beauty of the human predicament, so much more deeply colored than mere sunshine, that seems to my taste to be excluded from the optimism I am talking about. . . .

At present I am doing all I am able to do by making my daily effort to find some contact with God even though I am surrounded by the baffling chiaroscuro of life. Its lights and darks seem at present to be prerequisites for the presence of any spirituality. Maybe, with time and the development of some spiritual technique, this situation will change for me. It honestly doesn't matter to me if it does change. For now that I have a reasonable certainty of maintaining some contact with God, I am able to endure the darks of my life as well as glory in its lights and hold a certain feeling of empathy for the rest of you who, optimist and pessimist, are riding in the same rocky boat I am. —P. G.

Where mercy, love, and pity dwell, there God is dwelling too.
—Blake

BACK TO THE ANGELS *William Walter De Bolt*

You who hunger for amusement,
remember that in the Middle Ages
they debated how many angels
danced on the point of a needle.
(If unable to laugh at this logic,
explain whether you have failed in algebra
or keep hiding a secret sin.)

Since trouble rolls like thunder
over the plains of ennui
and the hill country of hope,
maybe it would be better
to go back to the angels.

ESCAPE *Martha Fowler Reichle*

Whenever dull routine threatens
To deaden man's power to hope,
He may grasp a faint gleam of wonder;
Distend it; enlarging his scope;
Surveying remote panoramas
Which abound for perceptive eyes,
His soul will escape gray boredom
As it lingers near paradise.

THE LEAST ONES *Catherine Cabeen Houck*

Two for a penny was the price they brought
plain little things,
dusty and brown;
common as dried grass along the roadside,
common as cobblestones in town.
Not iridescently feathered
as the pearly grey dove,
but paid for at a cost
and offered in love.
With wings restored
and voices perfected
they carried the prayers of the poor
and rejected.
The little gift-bearers went soaring aloft,
hopes and contritions
tucked under their small soft
wings. Up, up and up to the Maker of all
who had fashioned them so
that not one would fall.

ETERNAL BEAUTY

Antoinette Daria

In the cooling days of Fall
Beauty is revealed. I recall
A crazy quilt of colored leaves
Mother Nature gently weaves.
Every Season has its beauty.
Growing food is Summer's duty.
Winter comes with glistening snow,
Spring makes the flowers grow.

*

POEM AFTER A STROKE

H. Richard Rasmusson

What do these words mean?
"I press toward the mark
For the high calling of God in Jesus Christ?"
It says to me, make it your ambition
To use your human condition
To grow a soul that expresses, first to wife,
And then to one and all —
The fruit of the Spirit:
Love, Joy, Peace, Good Temper, Kindness, Patience.

This is the highest success.

Such a soul overcoming every distress.
Help me, God of all grace—
Help me to aspire to this success.
Help me to believe that this is
Thy purposed destiny for me in all my trials
And tribulation.
Still my tongue of irritable complainings.
Forgive my many failings.

The Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him.

THAT WHICH IS INVISIBLE

Mildred Long

There is a form of prayer which is silent. It is a state in which the soul is like the surface of a deep lake, so deep there is no ripple on it, no movement in it. But it makes a perfect reflection of the sky and mountains above it.

Sometimes the soul can attain this quietness, free from thought yet intent on that which it receives from the heavens. In this passive state it absorbs into itself that which God has to give: truth, goodness, peace, serenity. In these moments it grows toward God as a flower reaches toward the sun. It begins to partake of the divine nature by absorption, by beholding the face of Christ till we are changed into His image. It is that communion of the soul with God which needs no words, requires only a receptive heart and a yearning after love and purity.

Purity is God-given. It is attained not by deeds or outward striving. It is that which God pours out upon us through our receptivity and our companionship with Him. To know God and feel His love we must be silent within. A lake with a troubled surface does not offer a good reflection.

If there is this core of silence, we are greatly protected from the noisy world. More than that, it is here we are able to listen to what God has to say to us. This is the source of true inspiration. What transpires here no one will ever know. But eventually it will be evidenced in the face—a light in the eyes, a radiance in the smile, a something spiritual and intangible for which there is no explanation except that that soul has touched the source of all true religion and drawn upon the fountain of life and truth. In this sense what God speaks in the silence will one day be broadcast to the world.

Silent communion with God is indispensable to spiritual growth and understanding.

SPIRITUAL SUBSTANCE

Jaye Giammarino

Faith
is planting out of season;
Faith
is dreaming beyond reason;
Faith
is sharing cares with God;
Faith
is thinking you see Him nod.

* * *

THE PIGEON FLIGHT

A story by Eleanor Ebersole

A pigeon once found itself unwanted on the streets where it was born. One day, tired of being stoned and scoffed at, the pigeon took the one gift it had, its wings, and raised them high in flight. On and on the pigeon flew, beyond everything it had ever known.

High on the rocks near the far river the pigeon rested, almost overwhelmed by all that it saw. One rock it chose to rest upon, and a crevice to make a home. Much time passed before the pigeon could sing its own resonant song without expecting a kick or a stone. And so it sang. Then, finally, it breathed one long sigh and began to travel the distance back to where its flight had begun.

Without staying longer than it took to convince a few others to follow, the flight resumed again.

Perhaps the pigeon wondered whether or not the mountain home was a dream, but it never wavered in flight nor did it stop to let the others become satisfied.

To the rocks and crevices they flew. There, with those who followed after, they built a life that a pigeon seemed entitled to.

TWO POEMS *by Carla Patsuris*

SUNFLOWER

Your beneficence,
Helianthus,
Fused with a Presence
Of blazingly-bright
Abundant light
Summers a weathered picket-fence
And broken rose-trellised bowers.

Are you a wild weed,
Helianthus,
From some vague elysian

Or—before God—
A burning rod
To mark and comfort comings and goings
Of a lonely man through his terminal hours?

* * *

LOVE-NOTE TO NEW YORK CITY

Love is a linguist
And voice needs ear:

Among all these people
Tantamount to an age
Of inattentive tempo
There must be some who understand
The language of a heart.

Poem find your page!

A MEDITATION: FROZEN FLIGHT

Emma S. McLaughlin

"I like your birds," she said, as we stood talking just inside the front door. At first, I was not aware of her meaning.

"My birds?"

"The ones above the organ," she replied.

"Oh! You mean the ducks." She nodded agreement, smiling, then offering a hasty goodbye, she was gone.

While guests gathered their belongings together, preparing to leave the afternoon meeting, I glanced up at the three ducks frozen in flight on a beige expanse of artificial sky. Yes, they *were* lovely. I had thought so when I saw them in the store — and knew I had to have them. I told myself the bare space on the wall cried out in need of them. I was not satisfied until I knew they were mine and I could look at them whenever I desired. I thought it again, the day I drove the nails in place and mounted the ducks in flight formation, each one a trifle behind and a distance below the preceding one.

Later, when all the guests were gone, the buffet candles still casting their mellow light, I sat down at the organ and as I played, I studied the ducks again from a new angle. Their bodies were stained mahogany and the wings brass, feathered along the curve. I thought it rather sad that the hand of their creator had lacked the power to give them life. There they were, graceful, wings poised for migration — and going nowhere. Why? Common sense could easily answer that one; they weren't alive. Human hands, no matter how gifted, are powerless to give life, to cast a bird aloft and have it soar skyward.

The next question was more difficult to answer. Why was I, in a manner of speaking, nailed to a wall? I *had* that precious gift of life and invisible wings. What prevented me from spreading them in free flight? What prevented so many others from doing likewise?

Most of us have a flight plan, a destination we desire to reach, a goal we hope to achieve. What happens to force us off our course, bring us earthward, keep us hiding among the tangled

grass of lost marshlands?

I have come to the conclusion that, in many instances, fear is the culprit. We are afraid of what lies ahead in that trackless arc of sky. Will there be constellations to guide us, and places to rest along the way? Will we encounter storms that, beating against us, will wound both body and spirit? We doubt the strength of our own wings. Will they measure up to the great distance we must travel? Will hearts fail before we find the still waters?

Some of us, timid from the beginning, never quite comfortable with the flock, hang back, looking for a quiet pond and solitude. The immensity of so large a band is in itself a threat. On the other hand, there are those who want to join up with the migration but hesitate, fearful of being rejected. They are alone and lonely as their little pool of life freezes over.

Fear is the hunter's bullet that finds its mark and sends us, one by one, plummeting to earth. Fear is the pool of oil below that coats flight feathers and imprisons us. What can be done about it?

I wish there were an easy solution. Fear, in itself, isn't *all* bad; it is a built-in defense mechanism that stands ready to protect us from many harmful things in life. I suppose belief and strong faith are the greatest enemies of fear. We must believe in ourselves and our own capabilities, we must believe in others and, most important of all, we must believe in that power beyond all power.

If we are ever to spread our wings in flight, we must trust enough to rise on faith and make use of every updraft that He, in His goodness, sees fit to send us.

* * *

VIEWPOINT *William Walter De Bolt*

Housewives live longer,
he argues, since they do not
retire like husbands.

EDEN

Eleanor Ebersole

I have come back, Lord,
to the garden;
the wandering
never amounted to much.
O, I learned a little;
though, probably
I already knew that.
Seldom did I
hold anything
more than before.
Yes, Lord.
The garden held it all.
It was I
who dreamt
the apple's necessity.

* * *

FULFILLMENT

Margaret O. Richardson

If I can touch your heart in some small way
that while I am still here, you are compelled to say
I love her —
this is as I willed.

If I have touched your life in some small way
that after I am gone you can still say
I miss her —
then I will be fulfilled.

TEARS ARE THE WEEPING OF THE MIND

Josephine H. Voracek

Should some great sorrow, with strength of years, and peace-destroying power, leave you but fear, lost faith and hope, anguished tears—BE STILL!—Out of the turbulent mass God appears. And there is healing, in the silence, that adheres.

All through life the great cry of the human soul is for peace. But peace cannot be ours if we do not have complete confidence in our God.

If you are searching for peace, you will find no greater aid to its attainment than in the Twenty-third Psalm. The very essence of Christian Doctrine within itself. Millions of people from all over the world know of the comfort it has brought the sorrowing, of the tears it has dried, the many heartaches it has eased. It is read by the sick and is read to the dying.

Did not God say: "Come unto me!" Go to Him in prayer. Place all your affairs in His care and keeping. Trust Him to adjust all things in your life. For He has promised: "Peace, I leave with you; and Peace I give unto you."

Troubles and sorrows are often Blessings in disguise. We can find good in all things if we but look for them. So take the good out of every situation which arises.

Be not afraid for it matters not how the troubled waters of your life churn and spill around you. Did God not speak to the angry and raging waters, and did they not become peaceful and calm? Then believe He can do the same for you. Be not of little faith, for there is nothing God cannot do. With God, nothing is impossible.

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I

will fear no evil, for Thou art with me." Promise yourself to believe this. Live true to your promise.

Did God not say and promise: "Lo, I am with you always"? And if God is with you, you cannot become the prey of evil forces. Doesn't it give you a wonderful feeling to know that if God is with you, nothing or no one can be against you?

Open up your troubled mind and lose yourself in prayer. For prayer mirrors God's peace and love. To know God is to live and become renewed and refreshed. Believe God is with you always. Walk with Him and talk to Him. Serve Him and love Him. Live in Peace, and Peace will be with you.

* * *

THINGS ETERNAL *Albert Jacobsen*

Each one of us is like a single grain
In the sandglass that holds Eternity—
Each mortal is atomic as the dust,
Helpless at birth, departing helplessly;
But human minds are so diversely wrought
That though so many try to mitigate
The woes of this scarred world, too many add
To its afflictions, sowing fear and hate.

Yet, I feel retribution will prevail,
And certain values will forever stand—
The laws of Nature and the universe
And all the wonders Providentally planned;
Spiritual love and Scriptural charity,
The true, the good, the moral, the humane,
The hope of resurrection, by His Grace,
And everlasting life in His Domain.

WHAT IS PEACE?

Vivian M. Singerling

The world cries out for "peace" when it is involved in war. Only at this time does the word become predominant in our minds.

Dictionaries define peace as "freedom from war or civil disorder." This part we read and understand. But then the definition continues with "harmony in human relations" and "tranquility of mind." We don't read this, let alone understand it. Only the first part of the definition seems important. But is it?

Man has conquered land and sea and air and is on his way to conquering space. He has yet to learn how to conquer his own emotions, specifically selfishness, envy, and greed. These are the great disturbances of tranquility, whether the disturbance is between nations or between individuals or inside ourselves.

To take the first step toward peace we must start at the beginning—the individual. Each of us must first work for serenity within ourselves. Each must attempt to alleviate or adjust to his disturbances. Each must attain a peace of mind.

What is the reason for many failing marriages and broken homes? Boil down the answers, and you find selfishness. Neither person wanted to comprehend or accept the other's point of view. It is much simpler to get a divorce than to work out a compromise. One might have to give in just a little to the other. Are such couples interested in peace?

Many teenagers revolt against parental rulings. They do not try to understand or realize that parents only want to aid them over the rough spots of life. On the other hand, parents refuse to listen to their children's opinions, whether their opinions are right or wrong. Parents forget at times that they too were young once. Here again selfishness prevails and peace is disturbed.

Envy and greed are demonstrated in families who must keep up with the Joneses. If the Joneses acquire something new, out they must go to get the same.

The angry young men protesting calls to their country's service may be camouflaging true feelings behind a veil of paci-

fism. Is it war they are against? Or is their way of life threatened? Whichever, rebellion is the result, and the peace they are arguing for is disturbed by their militant activity.

The sincere pacifist will work for his country in some manner during a war even though he refuses to fight. His attitude shows his effort to find peace between opposing convictions.

Man's solution to his search for peace in all things may be found in his religious beliefs. Within all the world's great religions are basic truths that stress some phase of morality. The writings of the ancient sages of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taosim preach self-discipline, virtuous conduct among all, and upright dealings among friends. Hinduism has its "Code of Morals." Islam stresses a strong faith in God. Christianity and Judaism, the two major religions of the western world, have the Bible and the Torah, both of which include the Lord's Commandments.

Suppose that every Christian and every Jew sincerely obeyed the following commandment: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's." The result would be the extinction of envy and greed among them—and a large step toward peace among men.

* * *

FRIENDSHIPS FLOWER *Judy Shepps*

Friendship is a frail flower
Needing subtle caresses &
Summer like sunshine &
Warmth to survive.
Friendship is a beautiful flower
Budding in bursting colors
Giving a sweet fresh odor
Ornamental & satisfying.
Friendship, like the fragile
Flower, has fragrance as
long as care abounds.

INCARNATION OF SIVA: SHANKARACHARYA

Francis Merchant

Part II *(Continued from the June issue)*

The time came when Shankara prepared to leave Benares. He was ready to shake the dust of the holy city from his feet and wander through the dark forest of life, sharing the waters of wisdom with all he found athirst. His period of apprenticeship was over, and he stood forth as a teacher in his own right. As a consequence, the word *acharya*, that is, teacher, was added to his name.

Recognizing his genius, a number of pupils gathered about him. Prominent among them was the well-beloved disciple Padmapada. He had received his name as a result of a curious incident. Once, Shankara, standing on one side of a small river, asked Padmapada, who stood on the other side, to come to him. Such was the faith of Padmapada that he walked upon the surface of the water to his master; at every step, legend has it, a lotus sprang up to sustain his feet. His name, therefore, means "He of the Lotus Path."

Leaving Benares, Shankara started out on a journey that was to take him from one end of India to the other. How he could travel such vast distances is something of a mystery. He lived from day to day and possessed no earthly riches. The reverence in which a holy man is held caused people to provide for him; the dignity of his presence and the spiritual power that flowed through him must have commanded respect wherever he went. Everywhere he founded groups which would perpetuate his teaching. This ceaseless wandering continued until the end of his life.

A curious incident is mentioned by the biographers, which ought not be overlooked. The sage was in the habit of engaging in metaphysical disputations with those who came to him, and if they could not answer his probing questions, to demand that they devote themselves to a study of his teaching. His lengthy discussion with a man named Mandana Misra had a strange sequel.

Mandana believed that knowledge must be supported by works in order to achieve liberation. Shankara held that the fire of knowledge was sufficient to burn away all illusion and to center a devotee in the Reality which is bliss.

The disputation that took place focussed on this issue. Both being learned, they quoted scripture by the hour, each in support of his own contention. So strong were their convictions that a wager was made: whoever lost the argument should adopt the other's way of life. If Shankara lost, he promised to relinquish his wandering life and become a householder. If Mandana failed, he agreed to give up all he owned and become a sannyasin.

This wager having been made, they resumed the debate. Hour after hour they disputed, each attacking the other's propositions with acute logic. Back and forth the argument went, neither being able to claim a decisive victory. At length, however, Shankara won. Some say that Maitri, Manadna's wife, an exceedingly clever woman, was called in as an umpire; not wishing to preside at a metaphysical discussion that could last for days, she placed a garland about the shoulders of each disputant and declared that the flowers about the neck of the loser would be the first to wilt. Mandana's garland shriveled first, according to this version, and he reluctantly confessed himself defeated. Whether Shankara won the argument in this extraordinary fashion, or whether he used the razorblade of cutting logic to confound his opponent, the end result was a victory for the wandering sage.

When Maitri learned that her husband had been defeated and was consequently supposed to leave home, wandering through the world as a lonely sannyasin, she was somewhat displeased.

Appearing before Shankara, she declared that he had not won a complete victory. Since husband and wife are really one, he must defeat her also.

Shankara, it is said, agreed. A second disputation began, which was even more intense than the first. Maitri put question after question to the sage, and he answered each with flawless logic.

Finding herself checked on all points, Maitri changed her strategy. She asked Shankara specific questions in regard to

love—a subject about which the learned sannyasin knew comparatively little.

For once, Shankara could not answer. Any metaphysical problem she had raised he could have analyzed with ease, but the mysteries of love remained in a book whose seals he had never broken. Under these circumstances, he asked for time; it was readily granted.

Shankara went forth from the house and walked about the city, lost in thought. On the outskirts, he came upon a strange sight. Under a large tree was a handful of men, and at their feet the body of a dead person. An inquiry elicited the information that the dead man had been a king named Amaruka, and that he had but a moment before breathed his last.

At this moment, Shankara was struck by a very strange thought; in fact, he saw a way of solving the perplexing problem Maitri had submitted to him.

Taking some of his disciples with him, Shankara retired to a cave. Long years of stern austerities and unremitting meditation had given him more than natural powers. He knew how to separate the soul from the body. Projecting his soul into the body of King Amaruka, he left his own physical vehicle in care of his disciples.

Preparations had already been made for the cremation of the king, when he confounded all by showing signs of life. No one suspected that the king who arose from apparent death was an altogether different person.

It soon appeared that King Amaruka was a changed man. He showed great wisdom in ruling the kingdom and won the respect of all by the impartiality of his justice.

Shankara, in the body of King Amaruka, learned the answers to the perplexing questions Maitri had asked him. The queens were his teachers.

Everyone seemed quite satisfied with this state of affairs. Only one fear lurked in the minds of the ministers and queens. They suspected very strongly that a soul of more mature wisdom had entered the body of the old king, and they decided to make sure that their present monarch would have no opportunity to dis-

sever his soul from its present lodgings. Consequently they ordered all corpses in the city burnt.

Time passed, and Shankara showed no inclination to return to his former body. He faithfully discharged his duties as king and seemed contented with his lot. On the other hand, his disciples became ever more troubled. The court order in regard to the burning of all corpses was an indication that the state officials were suspicious.

Padmapada, Shankara's chief disciple, decided to take action. Disguised as musicians, Padmapada and other disciples wandered about in search of their master. At length they learned about the miraculous recovery of King Amaruka from apparent death and concluded that Shankara had entered the monarch's body.

With some effort, Padmapada and the others secured an audience with the king. They sang his favorite songs and succeeded in arousing the seeds of memory in his mind and in reminding him who he was.

King Amaruka remembered—and remembering, acted. He divested himself of the body in which he was lodged and returned to his previous vehicle.

It was none too soon. The officials had already found the corpse of the sage and were preparing to burn it, when Shankara once again took possession of his body. Returning to Mandana Misra and Maitri, he successfully answered the questions that had been put to him. Shankara was acknowledged the victor. Maitri, however, saying that she was an indissoluble part of her husband, demanded that she be permitted to accompany him in his life of poverty and renunciation. Thus the affair ended.

During his wanderings, Shankara received news that his mother was severely ill and probably would not be able to survive. No sooner had he been thus informed than the sage hastened to her side.

Tenderly he cared for her during her illness, seeking also to impart the wisdom he had gained by long years of arduous discipline in search of truth. When her final hour had come, Shankara prepared to perform the last rites for the dead. His relatives were

aghast at the suggestion. As a sannyasin, he was supposed to have no earthly ties whatsoever and hence was debarred from officiating at his mother's funeral. Defying tradition, he persisted in his intention. His relatives, deeply disturbed, refused to attend the funeral. Alone, deserted by all, Shankara consigned her earthly remains to the purifying fire and sped her soul on its journey to the source of all being.

The ceremonies completed, Shankara returned to his wandering life. In large cities, small villages and remote places, the sage traveled, teaching men to find the path that leads to unconditional bliss and union with the Supreme Being. The glowing sparks in the minds of many men were fanned into a bright flame. Those who were groping for truth were taught a new technique for experiencing Reality. A line of teachers was established, dedicated to the perpetuation of Shankara's teaching—and unto this very day the succession has continued. In this manner the light kindled by the great teacher has been shed through the land down the centuries.

Having achieved all this during his brief thirty-two years of mortal existence, Shankara turned his attention permanently to the formless essence and departed from the mortal coil in which he had been encased. Long before death came, he had died to the world. Nothing it could offer attracted him in the slightest. Its highest honors he rejected as dross; its many gifts he disdained as an illusion. He who had tracked Time to its secret lair in the heart of the Eternal had no fear of leaving the plane where the deceptive hours inexorably record the curtain-time of nations and individuals.

Some say that he voluntarily left his earthly body. That, however, is conjecture. It is said that he simply identified himself with the Atman within, and this withdrawal of attention resulted in the death of the physical vehicle.

The passing of the sage did not cause his teaching to fade. It was a vigorous plant that blossomed all the more luxuriantly after his death. The debris of the centuries has not been able to destroy it. Numerous teachers have come and gone, but the doctrines of Shankara still flourish.

What is the secret of this perennial interest in the teachings of the Hindu sage? Comparatively little is known of his life, and biographies sum up available information in a few pages. The vitality of the sage's mind is discoverable in his writings, and it is to them we must go to comprehend the greatness of his contribution to the world.

Several bold assumptions characterize Shankara's approach to truth. The universe as we know it is the external manifestation of a vast creative energy called Brahman. The senses record the action of this mighty power, but do not reveal to us the energy itself. The human eye sees but the husk and shell of this inexpressible grandeur.

The individual, encased in the casket of the flesh, observes the action of mighty forces all about him. He sees everything dualistically, being ever conscious of the distinction between himself as the perceiver and the surrounding world, or that which is perceived. Man as the subject views the universe as an object—and thus the primary sense of duality is created.

Flowing from this belief in duality stream a number of human attitudes. Fear that this tiny stick of intelligent protoplasm, this blob in the vastness of creation, will be overwhelmed, annihilated or engulfed is an understandable reaction. A second response is the desire to master nature, to control its vast powers. Man thus normally and naturally falls into a dualistic mode of thinking.

Instincts, urges and passions confuse his mind. He is encompassed in a sea of illusion, yet knows it not. A multitude of glamors infest his thought, but he perceives them not. Furiously he struggles for security, happiness, and self-aggrandizement, only to find himself relentlessly pursued by unyielding Death, who regards neither the title of emperor nor the acquisitions of wealth. Subject to time, space, suffering and decay, he thrashes his way through the jungle of human existence. "The wounds of the world's pain" bleed copiously.

This haze in which man lives Shankara calls maya. It is the mist of illusion that veils reality; it is the sense of separateness from the source of our being; it is the ignorance that blinds the sight to the penetrating light of truth. The afflictions produced

by maya are legion. He who seeks to make a graven image of his self-hood, inflating his ego by clutching earthly things, is immersed in mayavic illusion. He who mistakes the unrealities of time, space, and the verdicts of the senses for the Real has not freed himself from maya's influence.

Is there a way out of the labyrinthine maze through which man ceaselessly wanders? Can he be helped to unshackle the chains of ignorance and dispel the fogs of maya?

Shankara answers these questions in the affirmitive. There is a way, he asserts, but it is a razor-edged path, and he who would travel it must be prepared to alter the focus of his life-purpose. He must be willing to raise the shades men so frequently draw over the windows of truth. Spiritual knowledge is bought at the price of a strenuous effort to understand. The goal is wisdom; he who would find it must be prepared to plough the untilled fields of the mind with one-pointed effort, for "none but a man's self is able to untie the knots of unwisdom." As earnestly as a man undertakes to free himself from a desperate sickness, so must he strive to dig for the buried treasure of ultimate reality.

What equipment should one take on such a journey? Discrimination, detachment, and discipline are excellent staffs. Detachment enables the striving person to observe life instead of being caught up in its whirlpools; discrimination aids him to find the globules of gold in a mass of dross; discipline gives direction to the judgments of discrimination. In addition to this, the longing for liberation should burn brightly in the heart of the seeker.

The destination is the achievement of a state of consciousness. It may be inadequately described in these words: "I am verily that Supreme Brahman which is eternal, stainless and free; which is One, indivisible, and non-dual; and which is of the nature of Bliss, Truth, Knowledge, and Infinity." Consciousness expands to an all-embracing inclusiveness; the temporal is swallowed up in the eternal; the finite dissolves in the infinite.

This goal seems impossible of attainment, but Shankara assures us it is not. It is difficult to achieve, he says, but no one need despair; the measure of sacrifice determines the de-

gree of achievement. The method recommended by the sage to reach this extraordinary goal requires close examination.

To begin with, the seeker is asked to believe that it is possible to discover reality. Without this modicum of faith, the impelling urge to search would be greatly weakened. The assumption is reasonable, however, because each human being contains the spark of Life; since Life is one, each individual is but a manifestation of the parent Flame. The spark is the Atman; the Flame, Brahman. Both are, in essence, one. Mystics sense this oneness, but most people blur their inner perceptions by the sense of duality. Accepting this theory, however, is quite different from expressing it in terms of consciousness.

Techniques recommended by Shankara for the broadening of awareness concern analysis, the attitude of the observer, the repetition of a brief affirmation, and the evoking of joy.

The analysis prescribed deals with the nature of the self. What, precisely, is meant by saying, "This is I"? Is the body, this conglomeration of "cuticle, skin, flesh, blood, bone, water," the true self which partakes of the nature of divinity? Is it the emotions, the mind, the mechanism of sensory response? He who answers these questions in the affirmative abandons the journey at the outset. "The thought that the body is the Self, in the minds of men who discern not the real, is the seed from which spring birth and death and sorrow." Clinging to a limited conception of the self and of the potentialities of man, the sage informs us, has fateful consequences.

Assuming the attitude of the observer, the seeker weakens the hold of the world upon him and learns to reflect more adequately on the scene that life unrolls before him.

The repetition of the words, "I am the Eternal," calls forth the divine image. Again and again this phrase should be repeated until it becomes a dominant life-motif. To counteract the false testimony of the senses which would identify the self with the physical vehicle, a vigorous attempt must be made to

assert the truth. By implanting this pregnant thought in consciousness, much can be accomplished. "The steadily-held remembrance that 'I am the Eternal' takes away all unwisdom, as the healing essence stills all pain." The seeker must establish firmly in his mind that he is truly the timeless self, the indestructible spirit. Though he appears to be a frail bark adrift upon the perilous seas of Time, he is in actuality an element of the unquenchable fire that forever burns in God. When this aspiration becomes translated into experience, the goal is nigh.

The evocation of joy constitutes another technique. The well-springs of joy take their rise from a deep source within, and he who drinks from these fountains thirsts no more. It is not the transient joy aroused by outer things that is meant, but rather that which is not conditioned by time, place or circumstance. By constant brooding upon unconditional bliss, a deeper awareness is born. "Whether walking or standing, sitting or lying down, or wherever he may be, let the sage dwell according to his will, the wise man ever finding joy within himself."

The weight of outer things constantly appears to contradict the inner vision. The senses preach duality; the intuition prophesies unity. These two views, so opposed to each other, are at war in the mind. The overwhelming testimony of the senses convinces most people; hence the pain, suffering, and torment which is theirs. Identifying themselves with the body, they become subject to its ills. The seeker endeavors to break the grip of the sense-presentation by saying of each outer manifestation, "The Self is not that, not that." This vigilance in attacking the apparent evidence of duality, and asserting the reality of unity should be practiced very diligently, for it results in true knowledge., "It is not this, it is not this: because this is built up, it is not real—like the rope mistaken for the serpent or like a dream; thus putting away every visible thing by wise meditation, the oneness of the two—Self and the Eternal—is then to be known."

A deliberate attempt, then, must be made to achieve the vision of unity. By failing to attain a non-dual consciousness, we close the door that would lead us out of the prison house of the sense-world. Moreover, we return again and again to this

sphere of endeavor until we have discovered its secret and unbarred the gate of escape. Such knowledge is a flame that can burn up the accumulations of ignorance and liberate us from the wheel of necessity to which we are bound. Action alone may bind us all the more strongly to the plane of dualism, but unitive knowledge cuts away the knots that attach us to the time-space world of illusion and suffering. It should be noted that the knowledge about which Shankara writes is not a collection of facts concerning the material nature of things; it is rather a perception of man's inherent identity with the primary source of his being.

This grand prize does not fall into a person's lap haphazardly. A stern effort is necessary. Theorizing, conjecturing, and discussing are all preliminary. Inner realities must be known and experiences. An awakening to a higher dimension of consciousness is requisite. That the sage should speak of his sense-transcendent consciousness in terms of paradox is quite natural, for he has projected himself into a different realm of being. "I am apart from the personal self that sees, hears, acts, and enjoys; everlasting, innermost, without act," Shankara asserts, "the limitless, unbound, perfect Self awakened." Achievement brings an abiding joy. "Rich I am, I have done what was to be done, freed am I from the grasp of the sorrowing world. My own being is everlasting bliss, I am filled full through the favor of the Self."

Psychologists who probe into the subconscious and find there the horrid monsters and demons of the egotistic libido would be well advised to study the dimensions of awareness about which Shankara writes. Is human consciousness the ultimate state? Are there not degrees of awareness stretching upward to unmeasured heights? Is it impossible to conceive that there may be three states—subconscious irrationality, conscious duality, and transcendent unity? The testimony of Shankara should be a spur to exploration, for he assures us, "The habitual self looks on its habitual world as real; but the real Self knows that the habitual world is only mythical, as also is the habitual self. The real Self knows its real oneness with the Eternal; it sees nothing but the Eternal, yet sees that what seemed the unreal is also the Self."

The nature of man and of reality, then, is Shankara's theme. The perception-apparatus, he held, distorts the Real. By dint of unremitting effort, it is possible to create a higher organ of perception which registers subtler states of being. Many centuries after the Hindu sage, Immanuel Kant startled the western world by stating that man, being the prisoner of time, space, and his equipment, could never know Absolute Truth. The German philosopher despaired of ever achieving anything more than relative knowledge. Shankara would have agreed that the mind of man as it is ordinarily constituted can only attain a knowledge of phenomena, but he would have also asserted that there are latent powers in man by means of which truth in its fullness can be known. The true self in its essence is unconditional existence, knowledge, and bliss. The analytic faculty of the mind, although it could transform the face of the earth, could not of itself apprehend the Real. A different capacity—that of identifying the self with the transcendent Absolute—may yield an altogether different answer. The intellect breaks up what is perceived into analytical fractions; the intuition, which merges all sense of difference into unity, may bind individual elements into ever expanding wholes.

For thousands of years, men have grappled with the problem of finding the truth by using the dualistic mind. Much has been accomplished in the outer world, but man himself is still a house divided, an unwisely coordinated bundle of impressions and reactions. Shankara points to a new path and promises that it leads to a satisfactory solution of knotty problems that thinkers have vainly tried to solve. Would we be wise in rejecting his advice and scorning his conclusions?

Which philosopher can offer as much as Shankara? The Hindu sage asserts that he bears a gift which is "the gain above all gains, the joy above all joys, the wisdom above all wisdoms." This treasure is the Eternal. He points to the plot of earth where this jewel is buried and bids us dig.

The person who commits himself to this venture has accepted a lifelong task, for his consciousness will have to be integrated about a new center. The comfortable perspectives of habit and tradition will have to be relinquished; incentives

and interests that exalt the ego renounced; the power of public opinion negated. For many, the supreme object of search will seem to be a fanciful and insubstantial bubble. Yet the courageous willingness to continue the search for truth under adverse conditions finally creates the sage, of whom Shankara has written, "His home is space; his couch, the world; he moves in paths where the beaten road is ended; the wise man, delighting in the supreme Eternal."

The centuries have produced few men like Shankara. He analyzed the condition of man, prescribed a path that would lead to liberation, and trod it himself. He not only renounced the world, but found a realm of awareness where the fullness of joy is known and experienced. He looked into the face of the Infinite and Eternal and returned to show others how to do likewise. He climbed an intellectual Himalaya and brought back news of the rich domains that lie beyond. A world that trembles on the verge of destruction from atomic warfare might do well to turn to Shankara for guidance.

The sage of Advaitism has long ago merged into the Absolute, but his robe and staff will be conferred on anyone who holds fast to the memorable precepts with which he brightened the pages of his books.

* * *

TIME *Florence B. Unangst*

Time —
We count it —
We spend it —
We use it —
Abuse it —
Yet, it is man's invention
Not God's.

Time —
We can enjoy it —
Employ it
For God's purpose
Not man's alone.

God be in my head, and in my understanding;
God be in mine eyes, and in my looking;
God be in my mouth, and in my speaking;
God be in my heart, and in my thinking;
God be at mine end and at my departing.

* * *

EVERYDAY FAITH

Reuben L. Musey

If you came home tonight with defeat in your heart, you probably went to work with the same spirit in the morning.

Nearly two thousand years ago, Saint Paul stood on Mars Hill and told the Athenians that his "God that made the world and all things therein...dwelleth not in temples made with hands ....In Him we live, and move, and have our being."

This is an excellent way of telling us that the solution of all our troubles will be found in the Word of God. His word is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

Isaiah wrote: "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand forever."

Faith, Paul reminds us, "is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

The faith of our fathers is ageless. If we will but investigate the promises in the Bible, life will take on new meaning. Never again will our spirits be depressed. In the worst situation you have to face during the next twenty-four hours, say to yourself: "My Lord is talking with me through this dark hour. He will not let me fail beyond all hope of rescue if I put my trust in Him."

Try repeating these words again and again—if necessary ten times in the morning and ten times in the evening. Augment their potency with prayer.

THE LORD RESPONDS

Leonard Opalov

A poet sat
at his desk.
His pen was dry
and thirsty.
He immersed it
in an inky well, —
an inkwell.
It was on a Thursday,
and he yearned
for the Sabbath,
when Divinity hovers
in the Botticelli-like spheres,
and the Lord sends
to earth a benign angel
to obliterate
humanity's tears.

* * *

IN AN OLD-FASHIONED CHAPEL

Everard Thomson

You can commune with God,
No drums are beating;
Small world and quiet as
A Quaker meeting;
How sad your presence here
Must be so fleeting.

AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?

Zelma S. Dennis

Humans are the greatest procrastinators in the world. We make innumerable excuses for not attending to the tasks which truly need our attention. The many times we promise faithfully that we will do these seemingly unimportant tasks, writing a letter to a longtime friend, phoning or visiting someone who is sick or elderly. True, these are not worldshaking things, but they are important in the makeup of our lives.

Concern for our fellow men is the Christ-inspired way of life. We often assume that because our life is progressing on an even keel everyone is blessed with the same. Too often we discover that someone close to us needed our care and love. Too many times we let our inner promptings go unheeded and allow an opportunity to be of service slip by.

In the great rush of daily activity we tend to forget that there are many lonely people adrift. Souls so distressed by their solitude that they have forgotten how to reach out and embrace the compassion of the human heart. The need to be understood, loved, and appreciated is the most outstanding longing of the human today.

How many could be saved from needless self-reprisal, despair, suicide, and oblivion if someone would heed the calls of distress from the human soul. We live in a world of cold, computerized fact, but no machine gathers up the cares and burdens of people and pours out to them the healing love and tenderness of the understanding heart. Divine love created the understanding heart in order to perpetuate this Christ-like ideal.

We must attune ourselves to feeling day by day the importance of this need. Forget our selfish desires and seek out those who need our strength, our courage, and our inspiration. If we follow the radar of the spirit as it contacts another soul, and if we are ready to give freely of that special love with which God has endowed our hearts, we are then our brother's keeper.

STAINED GLASS

Elizabeth Searle Lamb

Oh, I would be a window of stained glass
To let the holy light stream through
In glorious radiance of joy, then pass
Into the world to bring light, too,
To all the seeking, searching ones still lost
Who have not found the Lord, their God.
This light can calm the stormy, tempest-tossed
High seas, and with divining rod
Lead each lost soul unto his God above,
In a brilliant, shining joy.

I would be a window lighted for God's love,
Now cleansed of darkness' dim alloy.
Oh, I would be a window of stained glass
Through which His light might clearly pass.

* * *

CARPENTER

Marion H. Freeman

He is a builder of dreams
holds plans within his head
and heart to share to care
each nail and board a home
he shapes and fashions

He does not live within these walls
yet care and interest touch his hands
to build for one a castle small
or large it matters not
he is a happy man and shares it

THE WISDOM OF AFFIRMATIONS

William Arthur Ward

Wise is the person who begins his day with affirmations, for he lives each hour with confidence and assurance.

Affirmations, when they are prayerfully selected, sincerely believed and consistently repeated, can miraculously change the skeptic into a positive achiever. They can transform the confirmed pessimist into a productive optimist. They can turn lethargy into enthusiasm, doubt into faith, fear into courage, and despair into joy.

Affirmations are tiny seeds that contain unlimited possibilities for greatness, achievement, and fulfillment.

Men and women of every age—those who scaled the heights of spiritual, professional, physical or political attainment—are the individuals who believed in and practiced the wisdom of affirmations.

Many centuries ago a Psalmist joyously affirmed: "I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living" and "I will lift mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help." And David won the battle with the giant Goliath.

A man of Tarsus ardently affirmed: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." And Paul became the greatest missionary of all time.

A sensitive English girl compassionately affirmed: "I will go to the Crimea and care for the wounded, the sick, and the suffering soldiers who need my help." And Florence Nightingale became immortal.

A lanky backwoods boy quietly affirmed: "I will study and prepare myself for the opportunities that will come." And Abraham Lincoln became the Great Emancipator.

A black man persistently affirmed: "I will unlock the mysteries of the common peanut and enrich the lives of my people and their farmlands." And George Washington Carver became a legend.

A championshio golfer, after his career was interrupted by

an almost-fatal automobile accident, courageously and confidently affirmed: "I hope to walk again; I hope to play golf again; I hope to win again!" And Ben Hogan inspired millions to press on and overcome their handicaps.

Affirmations can be as varied as the personalities of those who use them. But all of us are alike in some ways, and some affirmations are general enough to be applicable and helpful to almost everyone.

Perhaps one or all ten of the following affirmations will be meaningful to you:

1. I am an important person because I am a child of God.

2. God needs me to do His work, and His other children need me to be an example of kindness and unselfishness.

3. Because I am needed, I have a purpose; and because I have a purpose, I am happy.

4. This day is a gift from God, and I am grateful—genuinely thankful—for it.

5. Today I will improve myself because self-improvement is my responsibility to my Creator, to my fellow man, and to myself.

6. Today I will major in forgiveness and purge myself of every trace of resentment, bitterness, jealousy or envy.

7. Today I will be generous, giving myself and my talents unreservedly for the good of others.

8. Today I will be successful because I was born to succeed—and today is my day!

9. Today I will be found again by happiness because I will lose myself in service to others.

10. Today I will joyously accept life as an affirmation and thereby I will increase in wisdom.

* * *

TIME FOR NOISE *William Walter De Bolt*

Don't criticize. Youth's
the time for noise. Later sounds
will be like echoes.

A NEW CODE OF BEHAVIOR

Peter J. Massaro

We, the atomic-age neophytes, must set up certain inspiring, thought-provoking, and profound, deep-searching rules to assuage our anxities, namely. . .

1/ We must learn to try to solve things at a slower pace and greater depth. . .

2/ Mundane enervating circumstances must be lessened or completely removed. . . .

3/ We must show our best sides first if we are to expect any rewards of happiness. . . .

4/ We must learn to know what is fair and to expect no more. . .

5/ We must learn to live within our own spiritual or mental spheroid without tryingg to curtail or influence others'. . .

6/ We must be willing in our daily endeavors to give to all the ablest and most unstinting assistance. . .

7/ We must practice good fellowship among ourselves and others, thus bringing to ourselves the serenity we so arduously seek. . .

8/ We must provide all the necesssry sustenance for our health and mental alertness. . .

9/ There must be an assurance of comfort with advancing age. It is the infirmities of age which bring fears and bitter hatreds against the social structure. . .

10/ We must learn to accept graciously any weaknesses or infirmities in ourselves and perform dilgently all recommendations made to us. .

11/ Both individually and collectively, we must put into effect and carry out all accepted mores suitable to our social structure.

COBWEB

Mary M. Pronovost

Observe it closely.
Uniquely fashioned, it is
Like the soul of man.

No one of us watched
The artist plan his pattern,
No one of us knows

How strong it will be,
How long its ethereal
Beauty will endure.

But we know this: like
Man's spirit, it will be torn
When rough and heedless

Hands grasp it rudely,
Grasp it as they must, because
It is clad in dust.

INNER PEACE (My Son)

Gloria A. Martin

The wisdom written in his eyes
Belies his tender age.
The inner peace upon his face
Is as a Bible page.

His childish voice emits but love,
His tender smile is true.
His loving heart expresses truth,
Without a verbal clue.

CRISIS

Kelly Janes

In the middle of the
night
One turns from wrong
to right,
From confusion
To clear solution.

* * *

SOCIOLOGY

Kelly Janes

By the strong but
elastic
Cords of love
We pull one another
Whither we know not.
We only know
That where we have
been
Was bad.

It is the past
That we can see.
We walk backward
Along with our friends
Into the future.

NOTICES AND COMMENT

ADDITIONS TO LIBRARY. The Fellowship's library, which is available for use by all members, has received copies of the following new books: "Blades of Grass" by V. H. Grempel *(The Shore Publishing Co., Milwaukee, Wis. 53204)*, "Hasten To Take The Spoils, Make Haste To Take Away The Prey" by Mary Jane Tschirhart *(Philosophical Library, New York, N.Y. 10016)*, "Humanity At The Crossroads" by E. A. Hollender *(Philosophical Library)*, and "Handbook To Reason" by Dagobert Runes *(Philosophical Library)*.

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PRAYER

Paramananda

O Thou Supreme Spirit! Make Thy Presence felt in my heart, in my thought, in my whole being;

That I may be filled with Thee, leaving room for naught else.

Thou art the giver of all joy and all blessing.

Thou art ever unchanging; without beginning or end.

Thou art all-pervading, all-seeing. Thou perceivest my innermost thoughts.

Thou knowest all my imperfections, all my shortcomings; but Thou art full of love.

Through Thy love and compassion, do Thou kindle in my heart the true fire of spiritual devotion;

That all my impurities and unworthy feelings may be burned to ashes.

Help me to lift my thoughts from fleeting things and fasten them to the Infinite, All-abiding Spirit.

Free my heart from the weight of worldly cares and make it so pure, so full of love, that it may be a fitting altar unto Thee.

Free my mind from all doubt and delusion, that it may learn to trust wholly in Thee and to abide by Thy will.

O Thou Infinite Being! Reveal unto me Thy reality and grant that I may never lose sight of Thee.

Thou art the Source of all strength and wisdom, and in Thee alone shall I find true peace and freedom.